

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**Seventy-Eighth Session
April 30, 2015**

The Senate Committee on Finance was called to order by Chair Ben Kieckhefer at 5:10 p.m. on Thursday, April 30, 2015, in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Ben Kieckhefer, Chair
Senator Michael Roberson, Vice Chair
Senator Pete Goicoechea
Senator Mark A. Lipparelli
Senator David R. Parks
Senator Joyce Woodhouse
Senator Debbie Smith

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Senatorial District No. 2
Senator Becky Harris, Senatorial District No. 9
Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams, Assembly District No. 42
Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz, Assembly District No. 11
Assemblywoman Dina Neal, Assembly District No. 7
Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mark Krmpotic, Senate Fiscal Analyst
Alex Haartz, Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst
Julie Waller, Senior Program Analyst
Lona Domenici, Committee Manager
Emily Cervi, Committee Assistant
Jason Gortari, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Dale Erquiaga, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education
Marta Poling-Goldenne, D.Min., President, Nevadans for the Common Good
Joyce Haldeman, Clark County School District
Lindsay Anderson, Washoe County School District
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Sylvia Lazos, Latino Leadership Council
Jose Solorio, Latino Leadership Council
Michael Vannozzi, Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance
Jessica Ferrato, Nevada Association of School Boards
Patrick Gavin, Director, State Public Charter School Authority, Department of Education
Seth Rau, Nevada Succeeds
Victor Wakefield, Teach for America
Maria-Teresa Liebermann, Latin Chamber of Commerce
Victoria Carreón, Guinn Center for Policy Priorities
Peter Krueger, Capitol Partners, United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra
Ray Bacon, Nevada Manufacturers Association
Craig M. Stevens, Clark County School District
Tom Greene, Excellence in Education National, Inc.
Adam Johnson, Clark County Black Caucus
Mike McLamore, Nevada State Education Association
Peggy Lear Bowen
Nicole Rourke, Clark County School District
Tiffany Tyler, Ph.D., Nevada Partners
Theo Small, Nevada State Education Association
Dena Durish, Director, Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement Division, Department of Education
Jennifer Noland
Jenn Blackhurst, Honoring Our Public Education
Kirsten Gleissner, Northwest Regional Professional Development Program
Sarah Negrete, Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program
Chelli Smith, Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program
Karina Barrett
Daniel Brewer
Kayla Miller
Deborah Earl

Senate Committee on Finance
April 30, 2015
Page 3

Patrick Beckwith, Storey County School District
Lisa Noonan, Superintendent, Douglas County School District
Andrew Diss, StudentsFirst.org
Carrie A. Buck
Joshua Ford

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will open tonight's hearing with Senate Bill (S.B) 405.

SENATE BILL 405 (1st Reprint): Expands the program of Zoom schools and the provision of programs and services to children who are limited English proficient in certain other schools. (BDR S-887)

Senator Moises (Mo) Denis (Senatorial District No. 2):

For the record, I am Senator Moises (Mo) Denis representing Senate District No. 2 in Clark County. I came before this Committee 2 years ago to introduce S.B. No. 504 of the 77th Session, which enacted the Zoom school program. Building upon the success resulting from that legislation, it is my honor and pleasure to present S.B. 405, which expands the Zoom school programs and supports what is available to our English language learner (ELL).

You have heard many of the facts concerning ELL students in our schools but some of it bears repeating. Nineteen percent of Nevada students are ELLs. About 70 percent of them are enrolled in Clark County School District. Close to 90 percent of the ELL population is Latino and Spanish speaking and according to a UNLV study, Latinos are the fastest growing demographic under age 18 and now make up over half of our students in kindergarten through Grade 3. Until 18 months ago, we did not have a coherent statewide program to address the needs of these students. Many young ELL children speak enough English for daily interactions, but not well enough to master academic English. According to experts, mastery of academic language requires anywhere from 2 to 6 years under circumstances. The good news is by all accounts the Zoom school program has been an unmitigated success at bending the literacy learning curve.

You will hear more today from the school districts, but the Legislative Committee on Education received a Zoom school report just 9 months into their implementation. The impact was impressive to say the least. At Zoom schools, pre-kindergarten waiting lists were eliminated which added an extra year of learning for over 1,200 of our youngest ELLs. Full-day kindergarten was provided to over 2,500 students with the focus on literacy instruction, and also I will say that the classes were also at 21 to 1. The summer academies added an extra month of learning for nearly 10,000 participating Zoom students and reading centers provided intensive intervention in 30 minute daily sessions. In just 7 months, 40 percent of the participating students were reading at grade level, which is an amazing feat. Dr. Danielle Miller of CCSD said that this is the most effective education initiative she has encountered in her 24-year career. I am very excited that we are doubling up on this incredible program.

Let us talk about what is in S.B. 405. This bill appropriates just shy of \$50 million in each year of the new biennium, which is approximately double the current commitment. This funding is included in the Governor's Executive Budget. Each year \$39 million is earmarked for Clark County, \$6.7 million for Washoe County and just over \$4 million for competitive grants to charter schools and school districts in the balance of the State. The bill increases the number of schools that can be served and expands the program from the elementary level into middle and high schools. The plan is that these funds will ultimately transition from being categorical to being part of the special funding weights for ELL students under the *Nevada Plan*.

The school and students with the greatest need are specifically targeted. Those schools with the highest percentage of ELL students and the lowest academic performance would be first to receive the funding. Elementary level Zoom schools will be equipped to provide the following services. I will say, last time that is the way we also did that and there were 14 schools that were identified in Clark County and 6 in Washoe and they added 2 more this year. But this what they provide: Pre-K programs free of charge, full-day kindergarten, reading skills center, special

academies in the summer or between year around session including the necessary transportation, and professional development. I will say from last time to this time, we did not have the transportation available for the summer academies so that is something that was added this time. And then professional development, recruitment and retention incentives for school personnel which we did not have that last time. The school districts put some of their own money in to do some of that, but we did not do the recruitment and retention incentive part, that was something that we added. And then, programs to get parents involved which is such an important part to make sure that they understand what is going on and be able to help the parents.

The Clark and Washoe County School Districts will also identify middle and high schools to operate as Zoom schools. This is a new feature that we are looking at. Three total in Clark one in Washoe. These schools will reduce class sizes for targeted students, provide direct instructional intervention, extend the school day, and by that, rather than try to fit it in between the other classes especially like in high school middle school where they have a set number of classes, this would add one additional class that they could use for this intervention. Provide special academies in the summer or between year around sessions, offer professional development, recruitment and retention incentives, conduct parental involvement programs and provide other evidence-based services approved by the Department. That last piece is not in the elementary. Other evidence-based services approved by the Department. We think that they are in the middle and high schoolers, perhaps some of the additional needs, and we did not identify those; but they need to be evidence-based and they will have to be approved by the Department to do those particular things.

You are going to hear, I think you are hearing, Victory Schools S.B. 432 which is similar to this. The difference is: This is very prescriptive, whereas that has a little bit more of a list of things that you can choose from. This specifically says you have to do certain things. The charter schools and remaining school districts applying for Zoom school grants will have an opportunity to propose similar services for their locations. The funding made

available to these schools will be based on their enrollment count. Importantly the bill also includes key accountability provisions that require the State Board of Education to prescribe statewide performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the program and requires the Department of Education to contract for an independent evaluation of the programs and services that are funded. Of course, all entities receiving Zoom school funds are subject to potential legislative audits and are required to report the outcomes of their efforts. These reports will be aggregated by the Department.

SENATE BILL 432 (1st Reprint): Makes an appropriation to be distributed to certain public schools designated as Victory schools. (BDR S-1187)

You are probably aware that we started this Session with two Zoom school bills. The other was S.B. 430. The Governor's Office and the Department graciously offered to throw their support behind this bill and we worked with them to incorporate several technical provisions from their bill into this bill. To conclude, dollars spent now on ELL education, particularly in the early grades, are investments in Nevada's future. Economists have estimated for that every dollar invested in ELL education, Nevada would receive a return of between \$1.15 to \$2.03 per pupil and save the expenditures and future revenues. Our goal for all Nevada students is that they are provided with a high quality education. For too long we ignored our responsibility, really our opportunity to address the academic needs of our English language learners. This bill is a continuing symbol of hope for these kids. On a personal note, I had the opportunity to visit many of these schools over the interim. Both in Clark and in Washoe, I had an opportunity also. The one thing that I did notice as I went into Zoom schools is there was a different atmosphere. I would also like to point out that when they go into the reading program, the kids, they really love the program in fact so much so that when they finish the program, when they get the grade level they graduate from the program. They call it "zooming out." So when they zoom out one of the schools was telling the story of one of the kids that purposely tried to fail the test because they really liked going to the reading program and they wanted to stay there. In a different

instance, they explained to the child that they were going to be zooming out. The student said you mean I will not be able to come back and they said no, but that is because you are going to make space for another student that really needs to get this help. And that is when the student said, well, I know somebody in my class that needs some help. These kids are doing some great things. I brought in an example. One of the schools gave a little card that says Zoom on the front and on the inside they wrote in their own writing thank you for visiting; we love our Zoom class. Now you would not have seen that from a kindergartener 2 years ago writing a sentence. Usually, they can learn words and things, but some of things that we have seen the kindergarteners doing now in these Zoom schools and, even the first grade work that some of the Pre-K kids are doing, is incredible. So with that, that concludes my presentation.

SENATE BILL 430: Expands the program of Zoom schools and the provision of programs and services to children who are limited English proficient in certain other schools. (BDR S-1186)

Dale Erquiaga (Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education):

It is an honor for me to represent Governor Brian Sandoval on S.B. 405. As Senator Denis indicated, \$50 million was appropriated in the current biennium. Those monies were then included in the Department of Education's (NDE) Base Budget. The money came from the NDE as a part of Base Budget to the Governor. The Governor is responding to the Task Force on Kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12) Public Education Funding, which met during the interim and examined additional multiplier funds for different student populations. As the Governor reviewed that report with us, it was clear that there was a desire to add funding for the English language learners (ELL) population in our State. About 15 percent of the students in Nevada's K-12 education system qualify as ELLs. The Task Force report requests moving that population to a 0.5 multiplier on top of the basic pupil guarantee. That results in a large number when you consider the full scope of the population.

As the Governor conceived his recommended budget, we scaled the program's funding to what we thought the available revenues would be. The idea is to double the size of this program. That is why you have a \$50 million enhancement line item in our budget, adding to the \$50 million from the

previous biennium which is contained in the Base Budget. That funding will allow for the allocation of the specific amounts spelled out in the bill to Clark and Washoe Counties for Zoom schools and to fund a Zoom grants program administered by the NDE for our more rural districts and for the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA). In the current biennium, we served about 41 school sites with those grants. While the grants are not often profiled, they are as equally successful as the Zoom school program.

Currently, districts in Clark and Washoe Counties designate the list of Zoom schools. Several other elementary schools, middles schools and high schools will be added in the future. It is important for us to understand long-term ELLs. Some of the children in middle school and high school are newly arrived in this country and cannot speak English. Many of those kids have been in our school system since the early grades and are still not proficient in the English language and have English language acquisition challenges.

Funds will be allocated, per school, to Clark and Washoe Counties based on a plan they submit. The grants mentioned in this bill will be open competitive grants as they were in the current biennium. Those monies would then be allocated to rural counties and charter schools. The bill contains a reporting mechanism that was worked on in the Senate Committee on Education. Guidelines were set on how reports would be delivered from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Legislative Counsel Bureau and then to the Governor in time for future budget decisions to be made for the 2017 Session and for the NDE to make policy decisions.

Our long-term goal in the Administration is to move this categorical line item to a student multiplier or a student weight in the next biennium or biennium after that. The Governor has requested that this program include an independent third-party evaluation. This year we collected reports from the districts and the NDE on how we thought the programs did. The reports showed success in reading scores. We are aware that we will have to scale these programs appropriately because they will continue to grow in size and scope. Dollars will be increasingly scarce and we want a third-party evaluation for the 2017 Session and for the Governor as he prepares his Executive Budget at that time.

Chair Kieckhefer:

The policy of this bill has been well vetted. The bill went through, was amended and then passed in the Senate Committee on Education.

Senator Smith:

The Zoom school legislation we did last Session was one of the most significant things that we have done under your leadership, Senator Denis.

Does this bill expand the possibilities of what the money can be spent on?

Senator Denis:

There are specific things that schools have to do. They have to do the pre-kindergarten (Pre-K), kindergarten, reading and summer school programs. In addition some of the money can be spent on professional development (PD), parental engagement and could include money for incentives to help retain teachers. One of the reasons we put the incentive piece in there was because of the large number vacancies in the Zoom schools. In all the Zoom schools, there is at least one vacancy with a long-term substitute teacher in place. We want to make sure we have consistency there.

Senator Smith:

Are transportation costs also covered in the bill as an incentive?

Senator Denis:

Yes. Transportation costs for the summer school program are covered. We did not have that incentive in the bill last time.

Senator Smith:

When we had the budget hearing, I asked what the plan was for incentivizing teachers to stay because we have not had a lot of success with that. The policy side of this bill may have been dealt with, but did they get the teachers incentives part worked out in the Committee?

Senator Denis:

We did not work out any specific incentives, but had discussion about it. One of the things that I pointed out in the Senate Committee on Education was that some of the teacher's incentives could be reimbursement for transportation costs or PD. If teachers receive the help they need with additional incentives, that could be an incentive to keep them at their schools.

Chair Kieckhefer:

If you look at section 1, subsection 12 of S.B. 405, it indicates that the State Board of Education (SBE) is charged with prescribing a list of eligible recruitment and retention incentives.

If a teacher were still receiving a one-fifth retirement credit, would that be an ineligible or allowable expense under this subsection?

Mr. Erquiaga:

There is no language in that section that would exclude these incentives from being applicable to teachers, nor is there anything in this section that would preclude this from being an "in addition to" item.

Senator Smith:

I would think that the one-fifth retirement credit would fit under the old rules and we are carrying that obligation forward.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I have concerns about the expansion of allowable uses. If there is such a great return on investment (ROI) under the existing program, I am not comfortable diluting the money for additional expenses, many of which the school should already be doing especially in areas of parent and family engagement and PD. There is another bill that significantly expands the PD pool.

Senator Denis:

Part of the success of this program is that the schools are working on parent and family engagement and PD. The districts have put some of their own money in to enhance PD. The districts' money was not necessarily available for PD, but they know how important it is. The districts have also started working on the parent and family engagement part. There will be PD monies available. If that available money is not needed, then there will be an opportunity to expand this program to even more schools.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Professional development and family engagement are basic initiatives for management of a school. Theoretically, we are expanding additional funding for those initiatives in other areas of the budget.

Section 1, subsection 7 of S.B. 405 lists out the uses for Zoom school funding. Funding uses for class-size reduction (CSR), instructional intervention, extended school day, summer academy and others are all spelled out in the bill. It then requires that all of those services be provided in middle schools and high schools.

It makes sense to have these requirements in an elementary school. How do you effectively reduce class sizes for ELL populations who are traveling from class-to-class seven times a day in middle school or high school?

Senator Denis:

The intervention classes would be smaller-sized classes so ELLs could get individualized help. I do not think the bill address the reduction in class size for the additional classes that they are taking.

Chair Kieckhefer:

It may make more sense at a middle school and high school level to have this as a list of eligible expenditures. Those schools could then put together a suite of services that most appropriately meets the needs of students in that school, rather than have an elementary school keep that child in one place for the entire day.

Mr. Erquiaga:

In bill drafting, we picked up the language for the elementary school that you see in section 1, subsection 7, paragraph (h) of S.B. 405. It uses the language that each of the Zoom schools receiving funding for programs and services prescribed in section 7 paragraphs (a) to (h) of S.B. 405 are to be inclusive. This list is too long and requires schools to complete all of section 7 paragraphs (a) through (h). We need to make an adjustment to the language here in May. I will work with Senator Denis and your legal team to make that correction. This is an error in drafting that we did not catch in the policy committee.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Is the money in the budget?

Mr. Erquiaga:

Yes.

Chair Kieckhefer:

When we process the bill, we will strip the money out of the bill and leave it the budget.

Mr. Erquiaga:

That is fine. I ask that your Fiscal Analysis Division staff keep track of the allocation between the counties and the grants program because that is not in the Governor's recommended budget. We did not calculate that until this bill was drafted.

Chair Kieckhefer:

We will accommodate for that in the language of the bill. I will hear testimony in support of S.B. 405.

Marta Poling-Goldenne, D.Min. (President, Nevadans for the Common Good):

I have submitted a prepared document entitled, "Testimony of the Rev. Dr. Marta Poling-Goldenne" ([Exhibit C](#)).

I am speaking in favor of S.B. 405 on behalf of Nevadans for the Common Good and as a mother of a first-grade teacher at Dean Petersen Elementary School in Las Vegas. Dean Petersen Elementary School became a Zoom school. Because of that, my daughter received extensive training that has enabled her to become a master teacher of the 19 children in her classroom. In her class, 13 of her students are Latino/Hispanic and 6 students are African American. Last year, her class was the highest achieving first-grade class in reading and tied for highest achieving in math at her school. She has been a master teacher for student teachers for the past 2 years. Next year, she is moving up with her class and will become leader of the second-grade teachers. Dean Petersen students have greatly benefitted from this additional strategic initiative. I volunteer in my daughter's class once a week and know firsthand how her students have benefitted from this funding.

I asked my daughter what the three best initiatives were in her opinion. She replied that the best initiatives of this program are Pre-K for all eligible students, CSR in kindergarten and the reading center. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill.

Joyce Haldeman (Clark County School District):

I am speaking in favor of S.B. 405 on behalf of the Clark County School District (CCSD). The effectiveness on the policy side of this program has been excellent and has made a difference in targeted populations. I want to thank the legislators who worked on this initiative last Session. We are grateful the Governor included this in his Executive Budget.

You have heard a lot about the elements of the program. In the CCSD, nearly 1,000 children had free preschool as a result of this program. In the past we had one or two free preschool classes at a school with long waiting lists for those preschool programs. Now every preschool child who wants to be served is accommodated. We have a strong recruitment effort to try and get them into the program.

When this bill was discussed before the Joint Subcommittee on K-12/Higher Education/CIPs, we were asked questions about the supplemental services that the school district provides because there are certain elements that are not allowable. When we put together the program, we recognized that PD and family engagement were not a piece of the funding. We had a conference call with a number of people involved thinking that we could work around it, but the language in the bill does not allow those services to be held.

When the services were funded by federal Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, they did not have the new elements of the Zoom schools program, but they did have robust PD and parent engagement services that could not be funded by the Zoom schools program. We decided that since those elements were important to the success of the school, the district would supplement them so that those services could continue.

The total amount of money the CCSD spent for PD was about \$85,000. There was funding for PD specifically for Zoom school teachers, administrators and project facilitators. We spent targeted PD dollars on kindergarten and first-grade teachers because of the extended-day kindergarten. The expectation of first-grade teachers is significantly different from what was expected in the past. We also spent a lot of money to bring presenters to the schools instead of sending staff to a national conference.

Of the \$85,000 cost, only \$13,000 came from the CCSD and the rest came from federal Title I dollars. We were able to use the districts money for PD and

parent and family engagement in schools. We used Title I funds for additional PD fees and federal Title III of the Social Security Act of 1965 funds for the presenter we brought in for our conference.

We spent just under \$400,000 on parent and family engagement and about \$15,000 on programs and events in the first year of the program. We also spent about \$75,000 to hire a project facilitator for parent and family engagement events at the family centers located on the different campuses. In the second year of the program, we used over \$210,000 of Title I dollars to have full-time communities and school coordinators in those schools. That program is very effective at bringing the community and the schools together. We expended a total of \$386,700 other than funds from the Zoom bill.

This program is helping us reach the goals that we have set for these students and we appreciate your consideration of expanding this program.

Senator Woodhouse:

How much money did the CCSD have to provide for transportation for the summer academies because it was not funded under the bill from last Session?

Ms. Haldeman:

I asked that question specifically and they said that the transportation was allowable under the Zoom dollars.

Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz (Assembly District No. 11):

I am in full support of S.B. 405. I was one of the legislators who worked on the Zoom school initiative last Session and I want to see the success of the program continue. The money is needed for districts with high numbers of ELL students in their schools. Adding the funding for PD and parental engagement to help schools even further would be a great addition to the policy that was put in place last Session. We are seeing a high ROI and seeing our kids start on a level playing field when they go to a full-day kindergarten (FDK) now. During a school visit, I witnessed kids who did not have access to Pre-K who came to school on the first day of FDK. They were terrified because they had no previous school experience and did not know the language. This program is a wise investment for our children's future.

Ms. Haldeman:

In the bill language it talks about the recruitment and retention of existing teachers. That came by surprise to us and we were happy to see it there. In speaking with the CCSD's human resource director last week, she indicated that they are getting requests from teachers to be placed at Zoom schools. We assume the reason for that is because they have an extended school year and extended contract. The teachers work longer but earn more dollars. The retention and recruitment piece we are looking for could already be embedded in the program.

Lindsay Anderson (Washoe County School District):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of the Washoe County School District (WCSD). We started with six Zoom schools in the WCSD that were a part of our acceleration zone. We added two Zoom schools in the second year of the biennium and are excited about the results we are seeing. We were asked about how we additionally supported family engagement and PD. Through WCSD's other funds, we paid for 4 days of additional PD for teachers in our Zoom schools. The PD courses focused specifically on teaching ELLs. These schools are all Title I schools. The WCSD funds a parent involvement facilitator at each Title I school already. We did not spend additional money on family engagement, but we are launching a home visits pilot program in many of our Zoom schools. We would appreciate being able to use Zoom school funding to support those additional efforts.

Mary Pierczynski (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS). Our rural schools districts received money on the last round of Zoom school funding. This new bill provides funding for rural schools district on a noncompetitive grant basis.

Sylvia Lazos (Latino Leadership Council):

I have submitted a letter of support from the Latino Leadership Council on several bills to be heard today ([Exhibit D](#)).

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of the Latino Leadership Council (LLC). This bipartisan bill is a great solution to an issue that we have had in Nevada for a long time. The Zoom school bill provides a counterargument for people who believe that money does not matter when it comes to school results. The Zoom school bill has shown that when we invest, target wisely and

hold people accountable, we can get academic achievement results from these kinds of investments.

The actual funding multiplier weights for Zoom schools in these investments are about 1.3. The Task Force recommended that the ELLs multiplier weight be around 1.5. In 2006, Augenblick, Palaich, and Associates, Inc., prepared a study for the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau on school financing adequacy. The updated study prepared for this Session recommends a multiplier weight of 1.4, if you only look at ELL investments. In the 1.5 weight recommended by the Task Force, you could either have a 1.5 if you are an ELL, but you could not get additional weights if you are a free- and reduced-lunch (FRL) child. Approximately 75 percent to 77 percent of our ELL kids are also FRL. The actual multiplier weights the Augenblick study is recommending for ELL kids is about a 1.7 multiplier weight.

Members of the Committee expressed concern about having more uses for funds under the new Zoom school bill. The bill is trying to accommodate for the greater number of needs than what was originally prescribed in the Zoom school bill last Session. This additional funding will give flexibility to local Zoom schools to dedicate dollars where they are needed the most. We are not yet funding these schools at the full level recommended by the Task Force and by the Augenblick study.

About a month ago, the Superintendent of Public Instruction visited Manuel J. Cortez Elementary School in Las Vegas, which is a Zoom school. He saw that Cortez Elementary School has 11 long-term substitute teachers. At Dean Peterson Elementary School, 75 percent of personnel are probationary, meaning they are contracted for 1 to 3 years of employment. High quality teachers are the most important thing to have in every classroom. The additional provision is designed to help principals acquire the personnel they need and to be able to determine the dollars needed to obtain high quality teachers in every classroom, especially in Zoom schools.

Jose Solorio (Latino Leadership Council):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of the LLC. I am glad we are addressing the needs of our ELL students in Nevada. There are approximately 50,000 ELL students in southern Nevada and 65,000 ELL students statewide. We know that for our economy to succeed we must have students who graduate and are prepared and ready for career fields and higher education.

Nothing will prepare our students better than to have them become ELL, especially in their early years. There are still many other ELL students in Nevada who have not been reached. We want these funds to be used to help students and not to be used to fund initiatives that are already being funded by the CCSD. We support the expansion of this program so it can reach where it needs to be in the future.

Michael Vannozzi (Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA). Everyone in the business community has conducted diligence on the Zoom schools program and other targeted funding mechanisms. The business community appreciates targeted funding mechanisms because they tend to produce positive results.

Jessica Ferrato (Nevada Association of School Boards):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of the Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB). We appreciate the flexibility that this bill provides for funding. On behalf of the rural districts, every district in the State is a little different, even in its ELL populations. Flexibility in the funding will help us meet the needs of all families and students.

Patrick Gavin (Director, State Public Charter School Authority, Department of Education):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of the SPCSA. The SPCSA was the first local education agency whose board endorsed both the Governor's education policy and investment proposals. The SPCSA is the third largest and fastest growing public school system. Our ELL population increased by 66 percent in the past year and we are projecting a similar population increase in the next year due to the expansion of existing schools and the opening of one new charter school in East Las Vegas. While none of our schools are designated as Zoom schools specifically, each one of them has benefitted from the other resources allocated from S.B. 504 of the 77th Session. There is ample demonstration that this money has been well spent. That SPCSA has been recognized by the NDE for meeting all three of its performance goals. The SPCSA has met the annual measurable achievement objectives set forth in the State's agreement with the federal government under Title III funding.

Seth Rau (Nevada Succeeds):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of Nevada Succeeds. Targeting dollars toward students who need them the most enables high functioning systems across the Country and world. We have seen an example of that work in the Zoom school targeted dollars that were passed in S.B. No. 504 of the 77th Session. This Session, S.B. 405 expands on that and looks at creating a new funding formula for our State.

Victor Wakefield (Teach for America):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of Teach for America. Senate Bill 405 recognizes and acts on the simple reality that students who come to school with additional needs require additional investments. In this case it is language acquisition. This bill expands on the 2013 Zoom bill that was successful, but could have been much more so by enabling investment in teacher PD, recruitment and retention incentives. Every current Zoom school suffers from teacher vacancies and this bill is a great improvement to help eliminate those vacancies. This is a great bill because it targets funds and allows the right people to make decisions with accountability and oversight.

Maria-Teresa Liebermann (Latin Chamber of Commerce):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 405 on behalf of the Latin Chamber of Commerce. This bill will offer Nevada's ELL the continued opportunity to receive specialized education and will produce positive results in our State. As the Zoom school program continues to positively impact the lives and education outcomes of ELL students in our State, the growth potential of these students will be dramatically increased with this bill. This program will offer our State the educated workforce that can sustain growth and economic prosperity.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will hear neutral testimony on S.B. 405.

Victoria Carreón (Guinn Center for Policy Priorities):

I have submitted a prepared document from the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities with legislative testimony on Read by Grade 3, Zoom Schools, and Victory Schools ([Exhibit E](#)).

I am speaking as neutral on S.B. 405 on behalf of the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities. Investment in programs that improve literacy and English language acquisition skills should be a high priority for the Legislature. There are

two other programs that the Legislature is considering this evening: the Victory schools program and the Read by Grade Three program. All of these programs aim to serve overlapping populations.

There are overlapping uses for the three programs being discussed tonight. The Zoom schools program is targeted on the ELL population. All Zoom schools also have high levels of FRL students too. Likewise, the Victory schools program is aimed at schools with low-income students and those schools also have high levels of ELL populations. The Read by Grade Three schools have a combination of large ELL and low-income student populations.

The aim of all three of these programs is to improve literacy and English language acquisition. Assessment of reading and literacy problems is included in both the Zoom program and Read by Grade Three program. Instructional intervention to enable students to read proficiently by Grade 3 is also included in all three of the programs.

The Committee should explore the advantages of consolidating these three programs. When you have three different programs you will have three different administrations both at the State level and the school district level. Whenever you have different grant programs, you end up with different silos of administration and it becomes difficult to work all those programs together. In the Governor's recommended budget, there is one position for the Victory school program and two positions for the Read by Grade Three program on the State side. There is also \$30,000 for the Zoom schools program to evaluate that program. Funding is included within the appropriations for the Read by Grade Three program and Victory schools program for program evaluations.

Consolidation of the programs would result in one evaluation instead of three. The number of State staff members required would decrease as a result of only having one program. The fiscal impact of designating money for FDK in the Zoom schools program should also be considered. If Zoom schools did not have to use the money for FDK it could free up the money for other uses that could provide interventions for students.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 405 and open the work session hearing on S.B. 490.

SENATE BILL 490: Revises provisions governing transfers to and from the Account to Stabilize the Operation of the State Government. (BDR 31-1213)

Mark Krmpotic (Senate Fiscal Analyst):

Last week, the Committee heard S.B. 506, which was the sweeps bill, and one of three bills to address the General Fund shortfall in fiscal year (FY) 2015. Earlier, the Committee heard and passed S.B. 505, which was a public employees benefits holiday bill that provided \$17.8 million towards the General Fund shortfall in FY 2015. The sweeps bill was amended last Session by the Committee and those amendments are due to come back to the Committee soon. The last bill that addresses the General Fund shortfall, S.B. 490, provides for a couple of things. Section 2 of S.B. 490 transfers \$28,061,106 from the Account to Stabilize the Operation of the State Government, or Rainy Day Fund, to the General Fund for unrestricted General Fund use. The amount proposed for transfer under section 2 of the bill matches the amount that is presently in the Rainy Day account.

SENATE BILL 506: Revises provisions relating to state financial administration. (BDR S-1207)

SENATE BILL 505: Provides for the temporary suspension of the collection of certain subsidies to be paid to the Public Employees' Benefits Program. (BDR S-1205)

Section 1 of S.B. 490 includes other provisions. The 2009 Legislature enacted into law a provision that allows the transfer of 1 percent of the projected forecasted General Fund revenues set aside in the Rainy Day account. That provision has been suspended for 3 biennia. Section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (b) suspends that transfer through FY 2016 and begins the process for 1 percent to be set aside in FY 2017. The Legislature still must decide the fiscal blueprint for the State for the next biennium. Given that this provision was suspended in the past, I do not believe the Legislature is ready to make the policy decision regarding whether this should go into effect in FY 2017 or not. Therefore, with respect to this bill, Fiscal staff would suggest removing that provision from the bill with the ability to add it to the Appropriations Act later on in the Session, with the Committee now acting on section 2, which is a transfer of \$28,061,106 from the Rainy Day account to the General Fund. The

bill is in effect upon passage and approval which would affect this transfer in FY 2015 to address the General Fund shortfall.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass S.B. 490, deleting section 1 of the bill which would allow the Legislature at a future time to decide whether to trigger the 1 percent transfer from the Rainy Day account, but immediately start the process of transferring from the Rainy Day account its existing balance of \$28,061,106.

SENATOR SMITH MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 490, DELETING SECTION 1.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

* * * * *

Chair Kieckhefer:

We will now discuss S.B. 504.

SENATE BILL 504 (1st Reprint): Amends provisions relating to a safe and respectful learning environment in public schools. (BDR 34-1201)

Mr. Krmpotic:

Senate Bill 504 was heard in the Committee on April 17. This bill amends provisions related to the safe and respectful learning environment in public schools. Mr. Erquiaga testified on this bill when it was heard in the Committee. The bill implements policy provisions with respect to safe and respectful schools. It includes accountability provisions in section 1. A petition of a writ of mandamus creates the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning within the NDE, which is also included in the Governor's recommended budget with General Fund appropriations to fund that Office. The bill also amends the bullying definition in section 6 and amends the legislative declaration in section 7. It amends current investigation reporting requirements and tightens limitations requiring investigations. This bill is effective July 1, 2015. There are appropriations included in the budget to implement the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning and also to provide social workers in schools to assist in

implementing the provisions in this bill. Those funding decisions and budgetary decisions will be heard in a few weeks when the Subcommittee takes up the K-12 funding initiatives recommended by the Governor. With respect to this bill, staff has no particular suggested amendments and would recommend the Committee consider it as amended by the Senate Committee on Education.

Senator Parks:

This is a whole school approach to a very important problem and I fully endorse and support it.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 504.

SENATOR PARKS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

* * * * *

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will open the hearing on S.B. 391.

SENATE BILL 391 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing educational instruction in the subject of reading. (BDR 34-644)

Senator Becky Harris (Senatorial District No. 9):

I am excited we can start helping a large number of Nevada's children learn to enjoy reading. Literacy is one of the best ways we can help our children achieve a quality education in Nevada. In 2011, a study on early literacy found interesting and encouraging data. Poverty can have a substantial impact on a child's success in school. This study found that poverty is no match for literacy. The study found that poor children who are reading at grade level in third grade have an 89 percent on-time graduation rate. It did not matter that these children were poor; what mattered is that they could read.

If we want to raise our graduation rate to 90 percent, early literacy is the key. My husband was raised in poverty. His mother believed that if she could provide her children with a good education, they could be anything that they wanted. In one generation my husband's family was lifted out of poverty. Third grade seems to be an inflection point in literacy instruction. Until that age, children are

learning to read, but after third grade they are reading to learn. If you can read, you can learn anything. As a result, remediation becomes much more challenging after third grade. Research shows extensive literacy intervention in Grades 4 through 12 has little positive impact.

Senate Bill 391 requires the principal of every public elementary school, including charter schools, to designate a teacher who will serve as a learning strategist to train and assist other teachers in helping students who are struggling to read. The measure also requires parents to be notified if their child is behind in reading in kindergarten through Grade 3. We are not trying to address the problem in second grade and are addressing it much earlier. We are looking at conducting assessments in kindergarten to make sure we are bundling resources around these children so they can be successful. Schools receiving a Read by Grade Three grant will be equipped to provide supplemental reading instruction. Funding resources may include the costs of hiring and training learning strategists, the purchase of textbooks, computer software, PD for school personnel before and after an intervention program and other evidence-based literacy initiatives. Students found to have difficulty in reading would have their proficiency assessed at the end of each school year so a plan of action could be created for the following year.

Senate Bill 391 also requires that a student achieve a certain score on a Criterion Referenced Test, or a subsequent alternative exam, to indicate if they are reading at grade level. If the student is not reading at grade level, then that student will be retained in Grade 3. We have placed considerable thought in this retention component and decided that we wanted to delay that retention component until after children in this State have had the benefit of FDK, first-, second- and third-grade interventions. We are also delaying that portion of the enforcement for 4 more years so that we can allow the opportunity for the Governor's educational programs to take full effect and so children will have the benefit of all those new resources.

To ensure that each student's particular circumstances can be fully considered, the bill provides a process for a good cause exemption. If a student does not perform well on a test, but has a portfolio of work that can demonstrate they have proficiency and that there is a good reason to promote them to fourth grade, we allow that. Students who are held back will receive intensive reading instruction and have their progress monitored by the principal. The intensive instruction provided will be determined by the local school board or the charter

governing body and may include small group or reduced-sized class instruction, tutoring, mentoring, extension of the time in school, summer school and frequent monitoring of student progress.

These sets of tools work. An elementary school in my Senate District does not yet have the benefit of the Read by Grade Three statutory regulation because we have not passed this bill. This bill is based on some of the things Read by Grade Three does and protocols implemented that have proven success. Lucille S. Rogers Elementary School has about 37 different nationalities reflected in their school. They have a 78 percent literacy rate that they have built over 6 years of implementing tools similar to those in Read by Grade Three. Based on the schools that I have observed in Clark County and my Senate District, I have found that these are the right tools we need to include in a Read by Grade Three program.

According to S.B. 391, the remedial services must also be provided by a teacher who is rated as highly effective and different from the teacher who taught the student in the previous year. As a result of policy vetting in my Committee on Education and the input from leaders of at-risk population communities, we proposed an amendment that allows children in special education to retain their previous teacher. We offered this amendment because we would not want to place a child who is already struggling and at risk into an unfamiliar learning situation. The child's parent may also choose to add additional support and supplemental tutoring. We will help parents look into home-based reading programs or help them be mentors for their children to increase their literacy as well.

Senate Bill 391 appropriates \$4.9 million in the first year of the new biennium and \$22.3 million in the second year. These funds will be made available to school districts and charter schools through competitive grants. Therefore, schools receiving the funds will demonstrate the initiative to develop a comprehensive plan of action and will document their specific goals and objectives for improving literacy at their school. To ensure accountability, the bill provides a variety of reporting requirements and further requires the NDE, to the extent that funding is available, to hire an independent consultant to evaluate the programs funded under this bill.

I want to clarify some remarks of a previous testifier. It is anticipated that Read by Grade Three program monies would be implemented in schools that are not

Zoom schools, Victory schools and other schools that are receiving services. These funds are for schools that would fall outside of those umbrellas so that we have an ability to reach as many children in Nevada as we possibly can with these different literacy tools. With the passage and approval of S.B. 391, Nevada will join 36 states that require reading assessments in the early grades, 33 states that provide intervention for struggling early readers and 16 states that retain students in Grade 3 to help them get back on track with the cornerstone skill of reading. Senate Bill 391 is a comprehensive solution to address literacy.

Mr. Erquiaga:

I support S.B. 391 because it is a comprehensive literacy program with the third-grade reading assessments pushed out a reasonable number of years. The SBE adopted the Nevada State Literacy Plan. That plan has been in place for more than a year as part of our Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program federal grant that is active in a number of our districts today. The SBE was pleased to adopt that Plan today as it was developed by stakeholders and my staff. The Plan is broken into age and grade bands. For the first time, we have a plan that covers preschool through adult literacy and there is a grade band that is heavily focused on the Pre-K through Grade 3 section of our student population.

Governor Sandoval has included funding in the Executive Budget for this bill. A bill like this was considered in 2011 without funding and it did not advance. A similar bill in 2013 was considered and was close to advancing, but did not make it. We have built on those two bills and recognized the efforts of those who have put in their time in the past. We have been able to learn from the bills and hearings in the past to include in this bill brought by Senator Harris and her Committee on Education.

The money will operate through a grant program. It is nonduplicated money. The bill states money is allocated by the NDE based on demonstrated needs. The money would not be for schools that already have a literacy program such as a Zoom school. The funding will go to all of our districts. There is a small amount of money in the first year because we know it will take the districts time to adjust to the new policy requirements and to ramp up the programs they could apply for. There is a substantial amount of money going out in the second year of the biennium. We expect that to be a commitment from our State moving forward if we see the type of results we expect.

This program has a reporting mechanism for plans at the front end that are outcome-based and evaluations at the back end which are results-based. There is a delineated list in section 15 of S.B. 391 that describes the kind of programs available. There are programs that could be chosen by our districts. Based on what we have heard in other states, the grant use is often for literacy specialists and assessment tools that help instruction in the classroom. It builds and measures outcomes for our kids as they acquire reading skills. The funding is tightly targeted and is easily measurable. The reporting mechanism will allow us to hold the districts, charter schools and the NDE accountable with the use of this money.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Do sections 4 through 9 and the money become effective July 1? Do the additional sections related to retention, notification to parents and other similar items become effective 4 years from now?

Mr. Erquiaga:

Yes.

Chair Kieckhefer:

What does the \$27.2 million buy?

Mr. Erquiaga:

Section 15 of S.B. 391 lists the delineated services that would be expected in the grants as they come in from the districts and charter schools.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Is that the broad list of services and not what would be in section 6 of the bill where it designates a teacher in each elementary school? Is section 6 supposed to provide funding for an additional teacher or does it increase a teacher's salary in a school and designates them for this purpose?

Mr. Erquiaga:

In section 6, the school is required to designate a teacher. It could be a teacher at the school today or it could be for a teacher designated as a literacy specialist. If the school does not have a literacy specialist, there is an allowance in the delineated list in section 15 for the hiring of a literacy specialist. If we have a small school without a staff member for literacy training they may not

wish to designate one of their existing staff members and may wish to apply for a grant for that purpose.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will open testimony in support of S.B. 391.

Peter Krueger (Capitol Partners, LLC, United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra):

I am speaking on behalf of Capitol Partners and representing the United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra in support of S.B. 391. This bill is a number one priority for the United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra and we support the Read by Grade Three initiative.

Ray Bacon (Nevada Manufacturers Association):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the Nevada Manufacturers Association. We have seen the positive results of this in Florida. Not only did the English language numbers go up, but the math and science numbers went up in Florida too. Florida is the only state in the union that has had their National Assessment of Educational Progress scores go up for 12 years in a row.

Florida held back 18,000 kids the first year they implemented this program. For those students who were held back beyond the first year in Florida, 98 percent of the kids were never held back again. When Florida started this initiative, they were ranked 45th on their reading score assessments and today they are ranked about 10th. A few weeks ago, Florida passed Massachusetts on the percentage of their kids taking advanced placement tests and on the percentage of kids who pass those tests. There are both long-term and short-term paybacks from this initiative. We will not turn this State around unless we take this step.

Craig M. Stevens (Clark County School District):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the CCSD. This bill is a top priority of our organization and school district. Senate Bill 391 has a smart implementation plan. The funding in the bill will set up the essential programs for the school district and our students to be successful. The funding will help us support PD, literacy specialists, materials and programs that will go to our students.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Does the funding in the Governor's recommended budget alleviate the \$40 million per year fiscal note on the bill?

Mr. Stevens:

Yes, it does. However, our reading specialists would go away because of the funding that is provided in the bill.

Senator Smith:

Does this funding contemplate the CSR costs when students are retained because they will be retained in a CSR world?

Mr. Stevens:

This bill does not. However, retaining students does not happen until 4 years from now and in following sessions those monies could be appropriated. This is about putting the program in place and getting the program started. We have to provide a plan, write it and get it approved by the NDE. We are providing the essentials for our students so when it comes to that point, we will not have to appropriate as much money. There are several steps that need to be taken to set up a plan for this initiative and this bill helps us do that.

Tom Greene (Excellence in Education National, Inc.)

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of Excellence in Education National, Inc. Florida pioneered this policy about 12 years ago and has seen great results. Florida's Hispanic fourth graders are top in the country in literacy. If Florida were its own country by a literacy test, it would be the top in the world. This initiative has a high ROI that has all of the critical elements and not just good policy. This initiative is comprehensive and needs funding. Florida funded its priorities and we are seeing the positive results of that today.

Ms. Lazos:

Please refer to [Exhibit D](#).

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the LLC. We worked closely with Senator Harris in the interim on our concerns about ELL children. The bill is crafted so it will have a link between language advancement, language knowledge and literacy. Overall, this is a sound investment.

Mr. Vannozzi:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the LVGEA. This is the most popular initiative that we can invest in from our business members' point of view. From an economic point of view, this will be one of the strongest bills in the Country.

Adam Johnson (Clark County Black Caucus):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the Clark County Black Caucus. As a community advocacy group interested in the well-being and economic strength of families in Clark County, we want to make sure we have your support on this bill. We also want to assure all students, and in particular African-American students, have the opportunity to come out of school and compete in the global economy.

Ms. Anderson:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the WCSD. These efforts will enhance our existing multitiered systems of support that emphasize identifying kids who are struggling at the youngest possible age and getting them back on track. The earlier we can identify issues and provide support, the less likely struggling students will be retained in third grade. Retention in third grade results in a potential social stigma for those kids.

Ms. Pierczynski:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the NASS. The grants are competitive, and for some of our rural districts that do not have grant writers, it may be more cumbersome. We have talked with the NDE to see if there can be consolidation or a simplified process for the rural districts and all districts to use.

Mr. Gavin:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the SPCSA. This bill is about investing in our adults and our children and for building research and best practices that have a demonstrated track record of success. This bill is similar to the Zoom schools program which invests in success, scaling up and identifying proof points so it is clear what exactly works. This bill also demonstrates what is truly possible for all of our kids, including the most vulnerable ones.

Mr. Rau:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of Nevada Succeeds. Our two highest priorities are making sure every kid can read at grade level and that we have high quality teachers and leaders that can support these kids. The funding proposed in this bill is essential to make sure that we have more kids with the adequate support they need to ensure they are reading at grade level.

Mike McLamore (Nevada State Education Association):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the Nevada State Education Association (NSEA). The kindergarten aspect of the bill will help propel the academic success of Nevada's students and is the first and biggest step for this whole process. One of the most difficult aspects for starting the literacy process is early age students going into kindergarten. Nevada has one of the latest age eligibility dates for kindergarten in the country. We appreciate the amendment to the bill that gives an assessment to students in the first 30 days of kindergarten.

Ms. Ferrato:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391 on behalf of the NASB. We appreciate the efforts to consolidate the grant application to help rural districts that do not have the necessary resources for grant writing.

Peggy Lear Bowen:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 391. The programs like Success By 6 were a disappointment because no one wanted to pay for them. Women's correctional facilities have also been evaluated and it has been found that many women in those facilities are illiterate. It is cheaper to educate than incarcerate. Children of poverty are read to around 400 hours by their first day of school and children born into families with a better financial status have been read to about 4,000 hours. We have talked about CSR but we have not built the infrastructure to support that.

Senator Smith:

For the record, Mr. Bacon is right. We have been discussing this for a decade and there has never been the money to support the resources. Everybody always talked about Florida. We all knew that Florida funded the resources needed to implement Read by Three and here we are today finally having the money to do so.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will hear neutral testimony for S.B. 391.

Ms. Carreón:

Please refer to [Exhibit E](#).

I am speaking as neutral on S.B. 391 on behalf of the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities. The Legislature should place a high priority on programs to improve literacy, but there are a few fiscal issues in this bill that should be taken into consideration. First in section 6, it requires that each school have a learning strategist. Several schools throughout Nevada already have learning strategists that are funded by Title I funds. There needs to be caution in the bill's language because, under Title I funding, once something is a mandate from the State level it becomes a supplanting issue.

In section 15, it creates the competitive grant program. I know it was indicated that Zoom and Victory schools would not be eligible for funding, but that is not stated in the bill and should be clarified. There is also no criteria in that section regarding what the priorities for funding should be. It does not say schools with the lowest reading achievement rates would be funded first. Finally if you have all of these programs in one pot of money, then you could prioritize funding to the schools that need it the most and create a more comprehensive program that clearly targets the students in need.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 391 and open the hearing on S.B. 432.

Mr. Erquiaga:

Senate Bill 432 has its origins in the K-12 Task Force that examined the idea of student multipliers for categories of students. One category is for ELLs and the other is for students in poverty. When the Task Force examined that issue they looked at FRL statistics. The Task Force indicated that we need to begin to work on a categorical funding stream for children living in poverty and we should distinguish those children from ELLs. The Task Force indicated that if a student is both poor and an ELL he or she should not be eligible for both multipliers.

Our assignment from the Governor was to create a program like the Zoom school program that focuses on children in poverty instead of ELLs.

Senate Bill 432 is the result of that conversation with the Governor. Victory schools are Zoom schools for children in poverty. They will operate much in the same way. There is a slightly different operating mechanism to select and fund them, but the outcome is still the same. We are looking to change student achievement in our underperforming schools.

Rather than use FRL as a measure of this program, we chose the 20 poorest ZIP Codes in our State and focused on the schools located within those ZIP Codes. If we take out Zoom schools, because one cannot be both a Victory school and a Zoom school, we are left with about 35 schools. As new Zoom schools are designated, that number may decrease. The ZIP Codes are located in Clark, Washoe, Humboldt, Elko and Nye Counties. In terms of approaching the differing needs of our diverse student population, the Victory schools program gives us a great opportunity. The schools in those five counties and 20 ZIP Codes represent African-American, Native-American and rural populations. These populations are three different subgroups within the large group of children who live in poverty. Each of those distinct populations will require different interventions and plans to improve their student achievement.

The bill spells out that the NDE shall identify schools in need. A plan will then be required to be submitted by the identified schools in the targeted ZIP Codes. The plan requires community input on the solution for poverty. This bill requires the school go outside its walls and meet with database organizations, community organizations, families and other stakeholders to identify the root cause of what is impacting student achievement. The broad issue is poverty, but we want schools to identify the root cause and develop a plan to submit to the NDE. The bill delineates services and the lists of services have been split into "musts" and "maybes" by the policy committee. The rest of the bill discusses how the plan is put into place and the reporting process.

The Committee felt that there should be a role for the Legislative Committee on Education during the interim. The SBE will receive that report and we want the Governor to receive it too so it can impact future budgets for the 2017 Session as we begin to understand the true cost of a multiplier for poverty. With the report data, the NDE can make recommendations for the 2017 Session and make recommendations in preparation of Governor's recommended budget.

The bill contains some defining terms at the end, such as community and evidence-based services. The bill contains an appropriation in the Governor's

recommended budget and a request for roughly \$50 million. Those monies are to be granted out by the NDE to the schools on a per-pupil basis.

That will allow the NDE to allocate specific grants based on the number of students in a school and allow the NDE to begin to understand the effect of the multiplier. The NDE has been able to identify an application of a program that we have that will allow us to prepare a consolidated application. This will enable schools in smaller school districts without a grant writing team not to miss possible funding opportunities. All programs in the Governor's recommended budget will be a consolidated application. This will streamline the process of distributing this money and allow the NDE to evaluate the money distributed.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Section 2, subsection 11 of S.B. 432 states that any program offered at a Victory school pursuant to subsections 8 or 9 must be based on scientific research concerning effective practices to increase the achievement of pupils who live in poverty.

Is there adequate scientific research on all of the different things a community needs that directly relate back to educational outcomes? What body of research will support what a community may identify as its needs because some of the needs are community-based services?

Mr. Erquiaga:

Yes. We have delineated services and interventions where there is a good body of research. We want to be conservative with this money. Just because someone has a great idea does not qualify it to be valid. We want to ensure that there is evidence of success in an idea before we attempt it. That requirement will be the responsibility of the community and the school to demonstrate that there is a study or evidence-based research with an outcome. There is plenty of research available and the interventions delineated here have been covered. We are also open to people presenting their own ideas, but we want to make sure they are supported by evidence.

Integrated services came to question during the policy committee. There is a tremendous body of research focused around integrated services. In Nevada, there are schools that have had success with integrated services.

Chair Kieckhefer:

The bill states that the money shall not be used for any purpose other than what is outlined in section 2, subsections 8 or 9. The proposal for each district that is to be submitted to the NDE indicates in section 2, subsection 6, paragraph (c) that the plan must provide a means by which the school district or governing body will collaborate with the community to offer programs and services without charge to persons within the region in which the school is located.

That seems more like community services rather than education services. Is this in conflict with a use of the money to subjects in section 2, subsections 8 or 9?

Mr. Erquiaga:

I do not think it is in conflict. The list of services in section 2, subsections 8 and 9, contains some community services, but there should be enough overlap that this requirement will still be applicable.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Is the purpose of section 2, subsection 6, paragraph (c) then to provide services to nonstudent citizens in the community?

Mr. Erquiaga:

That is not the intention. They are community services for the schools and might include parents.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I read it significantly more broadly than that; but if that is the Legislative intent you just created, then I will accept it.

Mr. Erquiaga:

It is our intention that it would be for persons in the community who are associated with the school. I will double check that language to make sure.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will open the hearing for testimony in support of S.B. 432.

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson (Assembly District No. 17):

I am here in support of S.B. 432 and represent Assembly District No. 17. I represent the city of North Las Vegas and a few of the County islands.

For the record, I was born and raised in Clark County and many of the areas that will benefit from Victory schools were the areas in which I was born and raised. I am really glad to see that this is being proposed. I hope we can gain the support of you for this. There is also, even though a lot of these schools are low performing schools as you all know, a lot of these students are very deserving students so we would really appreciate your support. And then lastly, the thing that I really like about this is that it is not a cookie-cutter approach. This is going to be the opportunity for the community as a whole to embrace the plan for the school and hopefully we are going to have increased parental engagement because we know that at a lot of our schools, whether they are impoverished or not, parental engagement is usually at the top of the list that is usually a challenge. Again, I am here in support of this bill and any way that I can help out I will continue to do so. So, thank you so much.

Nicole Rourke (Clark County School District):

I am here in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of the CCSD. Students living in poverty come to us with greater academic needs, social and emotional challenges and often have health issues. We appreciate the various allowable activities within the budget. The NDE has provided us with a list of all the schools that would qualify for this funding and we are working on plans for those schools.

Ms. Anderson:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of the WCSD. We have been notified three schools would qualify to be Victory schools. These three schools are all very different. One is an urban school with our highest population of homeless children, another is a rural school serving a large Native-American population and the last is a district-sponsored charter school in urban Reno. The variety of services is particularly important in this bill and will help guide our work to serve students in poverty in the future.

Ms. Pierczynski:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of the NASS. The Victory school program money will help some of our more remote Native-American areas such as Owyhee and McDermitt. This bill will help us attract and retain teachers in those areas too.

Senator Goicoechea:

Can you provide me with the list of the 35 schools that qualify for the Victory schools program?

Ms. Pierczynski:

Yes.

Ms. Lazos:

Please refer to [Exhibit D](#).

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of the LLC. I want to correct the impression that this may be a bill that is designed for a certain ethnic or racial group. According to CCSD data, 71 percent of Latino students are FRL and 66 percent of African-American students are FRL in the CCSD. In the CCSD, 52.2 percent of Native-American students are in poverty and 27 percent of Caucasian students are in poverty.

I recommend a book entitled *Our Children* written by Robert D. Putnam. His point in the book is that poverty is the single most important issue that we need to address in society. As adults, we need to help every child succeed in their lives. We are not doing a good job around poverty anymore. This bill addresses that issue and focuses on the importance of eliminating poverty.

Nicholas Kristof has an article in the *Las Vegas Sun* about how Pre-K is the single best investment to be made for children in poverty. This bill does a great job of pointing out that Pre-K is one of the investments that will be taken into consideration since there is a competitive process set forth.

Tiffany Tyler, Ph.D. (Nevada Partners):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of Nevada Partners. Nevada Partners is a southern Nevada nonprofit organization supporting a number of important education initiatives. Recent reports indicate that in our lowest performing schools nearly 6 out of 10 students are living in poverty, almost 50 percent are transient, and 1 in 3 students' households are unemployed. There is a great need to respond to the resource gap that is evident in these schools. The number of interventions noted in the bill will help close the resource gap.

Mr. Johnson:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of the Clark County Black Caucus. We have heard about how the Zoom schools are a great example of the success and positive results that targeted funding can have on specific subgroups. Victory schools can do the same. Students in our lowest income communities attending underperforming schools can receive the dedicated resources and help necessary to achieve long-term academic gains. Our hope is that the Victory school model can be one that allows our State to target our highest need students. Victory schools will enable students in poverty and help them receive the community resources necessary to enhance their education and environment. The bill also supports the communities' voice in determining the necessary resources for each Victory school. Victory schools take into account the differences of our population and allow for individual schools to determine the services necessary for academic success.

Mr. Vannozzi:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of the LVGEA. In our recruitment efforts we deal with a workforce and generation of people who have come from high poverty backgrounds. We support any evidence-based intervention that can help remedy our workforce in the future.

Ms. Ferrato:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of the NASB. I want to echo the comments brought forth by the districts previously.

Mr. Gavin:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of the SPCSA. While there are no charter schools in our portfolio which are eligible for this fund, we anticipate that there may be some eligible State public charter schools in the future. There are other charter schools within the district portfolios that are eligible for this money. The SPCSA has been in close contact with both sponsoring districts and with individual schools about working collaboratively to ensure that those schools are highly successful.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I hope the schools that you charter do not fall into one of the two lowest categories.

Theo Small (Nevada State Education Association):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of the NSEA. I am a teacher who has had the unique experience of working for the past 10 years with students in poverty and students who come from families with stable financial backgrounds. There is a cost to impactful intervention with students who live below the poverty line. It is important to know that the correct multiplier ratio is at least 1.5 times the amount of a student who is not impacted by poverty.

This bill allows educators to acknowledge that they need to teach differently. We must break the cycle of having our students living in poverty and being exposed to underfunded schools, large class sizes, low-paid teachers, inexperienced teachers and extreme school environments. Our students need quality teachers, who have been sensitized by practice, to be responsive to their students' unique needs. We need to have the schools and the community engage in academics. Educators must change their negative attitudes and beliefs about poor students and families and replace it with a resilient conception. This bill will enable us to move towards a more successful school system.

Mr. Wakefield:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of Teach for America. Many of our core members and alumni teach at schools that are being considered for the Victory schools program. We support this bill because it recognizes and acts on the reality that students who come to school with additional needs require additional investments. We also support this bill because it is another good policy instrument and enables investment in teacher PD and programs to recruit and retain highly effective teachers.

The 2014 publication *Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card* found Nevada to have the most regressive funding allocation of any state in the Country. On average, Nevada spends more State dollars on kids farther above the poverty line than on kids at or below the poverty line when compared to any other state. This is wrong, unjust and a bad play for our economic development opportunities.

Mr. Rau:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 432 on behalf of Nevada Succeeds. We are supporting this bill to ensure that we are building the base blocks for the future

Nevada Plan. The K-12 Task Force has done a great job of creating weights for special education, FRLs and ELLs.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will open the hearing for neutral testimony.

Ms. Carreón:

Please refer to [Exhibit E](#).

I am speaking as neutral on S.B. 432 on behalf of the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities. The Legislature should hold as a high priority programs to improve academic achievement for low-income students. This bill has the most flexible uses of funding of all the bills presented today. This allows the funds to be targeted to individual student needs at each school. This bill could serve as a model for our recommendation of consolidating all three of the programs and targeting funds toward actual student needs.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 432 and open the hearing on S.B. 474.

SENATE BILL 474 (1st Reprint): Creates the Great Teaching and Leading Fund.
(BDR 34-1183)

Mr. Erquiaga:

Senate Bill 474 has two pathways: address the shortage of teachers and the difficulty of recruiting and retaining teachers into our schools; and enhance teacher PD and resources.

Dena Durish (Director, Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement Division, Department of Education):

The Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement Division focuses on the quality of initial preparation programs, licensure renewal, PD, teacher evaluations, administrator evaluations and leadership opportunities across the State. We have a comprehensive plan to focus on the educators in our system and how they collaborate with the other adults in students' lives.

Senate Bill 474 would be the first opportunity for the NDE to play a crucial role in initial preparation. It is a robust addition to the Governor's other initiatives to modernize the system. This bill creates the Great Teaching and Leading Fund

(GTLF) to address things that would be identified by the SBE as priorities for each year. This bill also addresses the teacher shortage in the 2014-2015 school year and anticipates doubling the teacher pool statewide for the 2015-2016 school year.

This bill is a response to comments we have heard from school districts about additional capacity that is needed to meet their PD needs for critical initiatives such as standards roll outs, assessments and educator performance frameworks.

This bill does not change existing funding sources for the Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDP). This bill creates a new funding pool of \$4.9 million per fiscal year to allow the RPDPs, the districts and other entities indicated in the bill the opportunity to apply for additional funding. There are conversations around where the RPDP funding will come from during the second half of the biennium. That concern is not a part of this particular bill. That is a separate conversation that will be heard by the Committee at another time in the budget hearings.

The bill also creates an opportunity to incentivize PD and improvements to the teacher pipeline by the NDE administering a grant program to external providers and gives the SBE a role in that process too. The outcomes of this bill will lead to decreased teacher vacancies and an increase of the number and quality of administrators in our teacher pool for our turnaround efforts. This bill also enhances school leadership efforts and helps us address the equitable distribution of teachers. This is a national focus that looks at how we are equitably distributing our effective teachers and how we are continuing to grow and develop our teachers in high poverty schools to help minimize vacancies in those schools.

Senate Bill 474 will help enhance our PD opportunities in key areas and help fill our needs in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and special education. Section 1 of S.B. 474 outlines the fiscal details of this bill and indicates what happens to unexpended funds. Section 1, subsection 3 indicates that any additional funds would not revert to the General Fund, but carry over into the next year so these funds can continue to be used. Section 1, subsection 4 indicates that funds are specifically for public schools and public education which would include all of our charter schools whether they be State

sponsored or district sponsored charter schools. Section 1, subsection 5 states that funds would be distributed through the NDE.

Section 1, subsection 5, paragraphs (a) through (g) indicate the entities that would be eligible to apply for those funds. We also have an alternative route to the licensure program. Clark County, Washoe County and seven of our rural counties have partnered with Great Basin College and have been approved this year to offer alternative routes for preparation programs. School districts would have access to this route through section 1, subsection 5, paragraph (b). In addition, universities, colleges or other institutions of the Nevada System of Higher Education would have eligibility to increase the capacity of their teacher preparation programs to meet demand. Our education associations, for initiatives such as the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) programs, are State associations for teachers looking to improve their instruction. Nonprofit educational organizations would be eligible to apply for this funding, too.

We have worked with educators and have made a few changes to this bill. One of the changes is reflected in section 1, subsection 6. There were conversations around the authority of the Superintendent of Public Instruction versus the authority of the SBE. This bill now gives the SBE the approving authority. However, this section also outlines that the review process would be performed by an assigned committee. The NDE would then develop an assigned committee made up of public and private stakeholders. The grant process would be similar to other competitive grant projects that we have, such as the Nevada mathematics and science program grants, and would allow for the awarding of those funds to be completed by December 31 of each fiscal year.

The second piece of this initiative is also in section 1, subsection 6. Grant money may be awarded for a period of up to 5 years. One of the concerns was that if it was a single-year allocation, the districts and the RPDPs could not engage in long-range planning. The 5-year component allows for that opportunity to have multiple year grants.

Section 1, subsection 9 discusses the utilization of the grant money and the categories that the districts or other entities could utilize these funds for.

This fund is dedicated to address accountability and cohesiveness. Section 1, subsection 10 specifically speaks to the effectiveness, the outcomes measures and focus on performance measures.

Currently, PD in the State is measured by first-level results. First-level results focus on whether the educators learn what they needed to learn from PD training. Sometimes educators sneak into second-level results. Second-level results are the application of what was learned from PD training and used to improve their instruction. It is rare that we look at third-level results because that is evidence that student learning and achievement have increased as a result of educators applying new knowledge and learning from PD trainings. This Fund, with the accountability measures in place, would also include the external evaluations and would include an appropriation for those evaluations. The external evaluations would include high level outcome measures to ensure participants are using their knowledge and skills to directly impact student outcomes in learning.

Section 1, subsection 11 highlights the coordination with the Statewide Council for the Coordination of the Regional Training Programs. That is an ongoing partnership between the SBE, the NDE and the regional training programs that we hope to continue.

Since there is a timeline for this we do not want to wait to do evaluations in the first fiscal year. Section 3 provides an outline of our evaluations. The intent is to issue a request for proposal (RFP) immediately upon budget closing and then go to the SBE in September so they can approve the grantees for FY 2016. Quick approval of the grantees would allow for funds to be distributed upon approval at the September board meeting for implementation during the 2016-2017 school year. The SBE would then meet again to determine the priorities for the following year. Section 3 has priorities indicated for FY 2016 which included: provide PD for teachers to provide instruction on the standards of content and performance in the subject area of science; implementation of statewide performance evaluation system for teachers; recruitment, selection and retention of effective teachers; and programs for leadership training and development.

An amendment was submitted by one of the rural districts. We will evaluate and consider how that proposed amendment would impact charter schools, school districts and other possible grant awardees.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Section 1, subsection 11 states to the extent money is available from legislative appropriation or otherwise, the Superintendent shall contract for an independent evaluation of the various programs. Is that a requirement or are we leaving it to the extent of money being available?

Mr. Erquiaga:

In this biennium's budget, there is a request for an appropriation for this evaluation which is also included in the Governor's recommended budget. This bill does not contain any money and does not reallocate money. The Governor's recommended budget includes an appropriation for the first 2 fiscal years, money for independent evaluations and changes the way RPDP funds are allocated in the second fiscal year. This bill is independent of what is in the Governor's recommended budget.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Is there a \$4.9 million General Fund appropriation in each year of the biennium?

Mr. Erquiaga:

Yes.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Is there a \$165,000 level of State funds within the Educator Effectiveness budget account?

Mr. Erquiaga:

Yes. That money is for a new staff member.

Chair Kieckhefer:

In the second year of the biennium, is there a transfer of \$6.6 million from the RPDP budget to this account for redistribution?

Mr. Erquiaga:

Yes.

Senator Goicoechea:

"For the record, the amendment that was offered by Storey County School District was submitted because they are concerned that they will not be able to

compete on the same level and anything we could do to help that would be appreciated.”

Mr. Erquiaga:

The proposed amendment is a good idea that we had not thought through. The RPDPs are critical in the rural districts because they do not have their own PD staff like the larger school districts do. I will work to ensure that the amendment can be placed in this bill so a level of funding can be made available. I want to check and see how the amendment would impact the SPCSA. They are not quite of that size and I do not want to exclude anybody.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will open testimony in support of S.B. 474.

Mr. Rau:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474 on behalf of Nevada Succeeds. Over the last year, we have worked with the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities on a report that addresses the structures of PD in the State. We want to make sure this bill has a strong aligned structure of PD in the State. This bill creates an aligned system to ensure the RPDPs can apply for additional funding so every kid in Nevada has access to teachers and leaders that are prepared with support from this Fund. This is one of the few investments in the Governor’s recommended budget that could be increased because it is the only bill that is putting money towards our teacher and leader pipeline.

Jennifer Noland:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474. I am a fourth-grade teacher in the WCSD and teach at a Title I school. Professional development has had a positive impact on my career. Effective PD empowers teachers, which then creates effective students that are learning and results in the retention of teachers.

For the past year, I have been involved in a fourth-grade art and history cohort lead in WCSD. In this cohort, teachers learn about the history of Nevada and how to teach that history to students. In WCSD, the PD courses are teaching teachers how to teach using complex text.

Professional development invigorates, motivates and excites me as a teacher. Professional development motivates me to continue to teach at my school because I like to teach the content and my students get excited about learning.

This bill permits grant funds for diversity in PD training through instructional rounds, social media and through several other innovative methods. If teachers are going out on their own time to seek PD, the State should compensate them for their time.

Mr. Gavin:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474 on behalf of the SPCSA. I sat in on a bill draft review discussion led by Senator Woodhouse during the interim about how to improve the quality of PD in Nevada. Many ideas from that discussion had an influence on how this bill was crafted. This is about importing best practices and investing in success.

Mr. Wakefield:

I have submitted a prepared statement entitled, "Great Teaching and Leading Fund Being heard by Finance Committee April 30, 2015" ([Exhibit F](#)).

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474 on behalf of Teach for America. For each of the previously heard programs to work we need effective teachers and leaders in each classroom. Today, every Zoom school in the State has at least one teacher vacancy and 80 percent of 630 or so vacancies in CCSD are in Title I schools. There are 800 vacancies across the State. This is the only direct policy or funding lever this Session that addresses this issue.

Teachers in our program wish they had more PD and wish the training they got was consistently good. All teachers deserve effective, targeted and embedded PD.

Mr. Vannozzi:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474 on behalf of the LVGEA. This is an economic bill for the teacher pipeline.

Jenn Blackhurst (Honoring Our Public Education):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474 on behalf of Honoring Our Public Education. My organization represents hundreds of families in southern Nevada and our one goal is to be an advocate for the best education possible for every student in the State. The quality of our students' teachers is the most important factor in their educational success. Providing reliable and stable support for our educators is a crucial component in the equation to elevate education. Parents appreciate having access to classes to help them help their children.

Mr. Small:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474 on behalf of the NSEA. Schools in Clark County are committed to qualified and quality teachers in every classroom. We surveyed our members on their PD needs and the feedback we received showed that there was still a greater need for classroom management, ELL students, more culturally responsive strategies and the implementation of technology in the classrooms. Meaningful collaboration among all entities is needed to ensure we are all offering quality PD. Nevada needs to focus on PD where every educator has evidence that they have made an influence on every student that goes into their classrooms. Our entity has provided training for over 2,500 teachers in CCSD and we will never reach the total training needed. The cost of teacher turnover is overwhelming to our system. This bill is a necessary investment.

Ms. Ferrato:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474 on behalf of the NASB. We appreciate the RPDs that are included as recipients of the grant process in this bill, especially in rural Nevada where there is less access to people with grant writing experience.

Ms. Haldeman:

I am speaking in favor of S.B. 474 on behalf of the CCSD. The CCSD was part of the consortium that contributed to the language in this bill and we recognize how important PD is for our teachers. The CCSD has 18,000 teachers and we hope to hire 2,600 more. The most important thing we can do is have all our teachers be trained professionals in the classrooms with the confidence and skills needed as they teach our students.

Ms. Lazos:

Please refer to [Exhibit D](#).

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474 on behalf of the LLC. The Guinn Center for Policy Priorities report and the Nevada Succeeds report on PD conclude the way we are delivering PD in Nevada is inefficient. This bill is essential for education reform. The lack of high quality teachers in Title I schools is a crisis and I am glad this bill addresses that issue. Teachers are not getting sufficient support in the area of ELLs, FRLs and special education.

For the record, I want to ask Superintendent Erquiaga that when he composes this committee that will be advising on how we deliver PD and how these grants are going to be selected that that committee be diverse. In most bills that we pass regarding to education, we have two pages of detail about how that committee is going to be composed. The reason we do that is that we want to make sure from a policy perspective that the committee that is making decisions is diverse and representative of our interest as stakeholders in Nevada and that is important for that to be part of the intent of the bill.

Mr. Johnson:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474 on behalf of the Clark County Black Caucus. Many of our African-American students are in classrooms in Title I schools. Our students today are in classrooms without one of the most basic elements of their academic success which is a great teacher or leader in front of them. Senate Bill 474 will expand the teacher pipeline and enhance the PD in a way that will enable us to retain teachers around the State.

Ms. Bowen:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 474. One of the problems the State has is the way teachers get their teacher licenses and the system that classifies them as effective teachers. I know a teacher who failed the teacher license examination 12 times due to subjective portions of the exam. The teacher license examination should have different guidelines.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will hear testimony in opposition to S.B. 474.

Kirsten Gleissner (Northwest Regional Professional Development Program):

I am speaking in opposition to S.B. 474 on behalf of the Northwest RPDP. This bill is described as a PD improvement bill, but it is not a favorable bill for PD and has the potential for unintended consequences. The GTLF is linked with budget account (B/A) 000-2618 and will divert funds from the RPDP into this fund and turn PD into a grant application process that many entities will be able to access. This is a problem because good PD that impacts teaching and learning outcomes and increases educator effectiveness occurs over time with consistent support and timely feedback. The current structure of the RPDP establishes the trust with teachers and administrators that is required to develop

effective relationships. This bill is not in alignment with a good PD model or with the national standards of PD.

EDUCATION

K-12 EDUCATION

NDE - Professional Development Programs — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-39
(Volume I)
Budget Account 000-2618

This bill also includes three important initiatives to be funded with the same money. Those initiatives are the teacher pipeline, the recruitment selection and retention of teachers and PAR. If these initiatives were priorities to be funded out of the GTLF at a level that would make an impact, PD would be decimated in the second year of the bill. Rural school districts would receive a small portion of PD support. We should separate these initiatives and leave the current functioning structure in place. The newest structure of the Statewide Council for the coordination of the Regional Training Programs is established by statute and is functioning. A system that parses out so many grants would only fragment consistent PD, increase misalignment and foster discrepancy.

Sarah Negrete (Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program):

I am speaking in opposition to S.B. 474 on behalf of the Northeastern RPDP. There are several issues that will affect the RPDPs contrary to some testimony that you have heard tonight. This bill has created a lack of cohesion through a lack of transparency. There are many interpretations of what effects this bill will have and on whom. We already provide multiple PD opportunities for different types of learning. We run workshops and help teachers create their own personal learning networks through technology. We also provide support for administrators and teachers in classrooms by doing instructional rounds and by providing immediate feedback. In addition, we facilitate learning communities and assure that all of our districts are getting the benefit of shared learning from student work.

The RPDPs are effected through B/A 000-2618 which is linked directly to this bill. With the creation of the GTLF the RPDPs funding is put into that line item and we are left with \$1 million to share amongst ourselves. We can write for

grants and can be participants of the GTLF, however by doing so, we are fracturing our ability to provide cohesive PD and not enhancing it.

Chelli Smith (Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program):

I am speaking in opposition to S.B. 474 on behalf of the Southern Nevada RPDP. Allowing the SBE to set the priorities will not necessary support the PD issues. It is possible that the SBE could only find the teacher pipeline as important, which would completely eliminate funding for PD from this pool. In addition, these grants request that everything done should be explicitly outlined. One of the strengths of the RPDPs has been the flexibility to meet the needs of the districts to which we provide services. In this grants scenario, we would not be permitted to go outside of the grant. If we are asked to write a grant for a specific content area, such as science, and a school calls us for literacy PD we could not help them because it was not outlined in the grant. This bill is based off the priorities of the SBE and we do not know what those priorities will be.

Finally, the Southern Nevada RPDP has three tiers of evaluation. One of the tiers is linked to student achievement. In addition the core leading council has indicated that we need to have a more consistent evaluation report across all RPDPs. We support their request and would change our evaluation system to have a more consistent evaluation. The GTLF initiatives should be funded separately and should not be placed in a pool to compete against each other.

Karina Barrett:

I am speaking in opposition to S.B. 474. This bill revises the governing structure of the RPDPs and gives them less flexibility to meet the needs of the teachers at the individual sites. I am a third-grade teacher in the CCSD who has taken numerous RPDP classes to enhance my instruction. The RPDP classes have enhanced my skills and have helped me get my current job. The RPDP helps teachers get teacher licenses and helps them learn current teaching methods. The RPDPs can only be supported based on the current governing structure allotted to them.

Daniel Brewer:

I am speaking in opposition to S.B. 474. I am a licensed teacher in Clark County and RPDP has played an important role in my professional growth. This bill works against the varied goals that it outlines if it changes the governing body of the RPDPs. This bill would give RPDPs less flexibility to meet the needs of teachers in our community. The GTLF in S.B. 474 diverts funds from RPDPs.

This would prevent them from continuing to provide quality PD to teachers throughout a community.

Kayla Miller:

I am speaking in opposition to S.B. 474. I have been a teacher and educator for about 4 years. Through RPDP I was able to get the content that I needed, credit courses needed for my teacher license renewal, continued PD and follow-up support. The RPDPs help teachers at my current school increase our ELL program, special education programs and response to intervention (RTI) program. Our principal from Somerset Academy of Las Vegas has expressed his concerns about the possibility of losing RPDPs because the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas is not a part of the CCSD. He notes that support provided from the RPDP to the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas campuses has enhanced teacher and administrator trainings, developed a stronger RTI plan and implemented intervention and extension programs that focus on increasing student achievement. Finally, he notes the RPDP has helped staff understand the Nevada Academic Content Standards and the depth that they must teach those standards for students success.

Deborah Earl:

I am speaking in opposition to S.B. 474. I have received incredible training from the RPDP. The RPDPs will help me get up to speed with new technology implemented in our classroom in the upcoming years. The RPDP provides quality training to hundreds of teachers and benefits thousands of students.

Patrick Beckwith (Storey County School District):

I have submitted a prepared document entitled, "Storey County School District Nevada Legislature 2015 Session Proposed Conceptual Amendment to S.B. 474" ([Exhibit G](#)).

I am speaking in opposition to S.B. 474. I am the chief academic officer for the Storey County School District. The current RPDP structure brings targeted, aligned and consistent training to our teachers. This bill would divert funds from RPDP and create a grant process for the allocation of funds. Districts that have worked collaboratively for years through RPDPs would immediately become competitors for dollars. The grant process would have winners and losers. Districts without the human capital to work through the grant process would find themselves left out. This bill could potentially decimate PD in the rural

districts. The RPDP has had a positive impact on our teachers and our student achievement results validate those efforts.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Did you submit the amendment before us?

Mr. Beckwith:

Yes.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Did you submit the amendment to the policy committee?

Mr. Beckwith:

No.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will now hear neutral testimony on S.B. 474.

Lisa Noonan (Superintendent, Douglas County School District):

I am speaking as neutral on S.B. 474 on behalf of school superintendents in Nevada. I am the Superintendent of Douglas County School District (DCSD). We appreciate efforts to support the recruitment, training, retention and quality of teachers in Nevada. Support for our educators and their PD is one of our most important areas of focus. I appreciate the amendment that allows for up to 5 years per grant proposal because this will help districts retain high quality trainers. The neutral status is due to a concern for the unintended consequence that will hit us at a time when the stakes are as high as I have ever seen them. We have made a commitment to more rigorous teaching standards for our students and have new assessments that align to those standards. Finally, we have a new evaluation system that we are rolling out for teachers and administrators. All of the teachers and administrators in the DCSD receive first-hand training through our RPDPs on the new frameworks for the Nevada Educator Performance Framework.

The rural component of this is my biggest concern when writing grants. Our six regional counties in the RPDP would have to write grants together and will only be able to afford a couple. Several grant opportunities will have to be bypassed by several rural counties.

Mr. McLamore:

I have submitted a prepared document entitled, "NSEA Testimony Letter on S.B. 474" ([Exhibit H](#)).

I am speaking as neutral on S.B. 474 on behalf of the NSEA. I have submitted a proposed amendment. We have not seen this bill as the only way to access PD. This bill is a targeted approach with priorities set by the SBE. This bill delivers the eligible entities that would be providing PD and target priorities for PD.

I have submitted an amendment to the bill entitled, "S.B. 474 NSEA Proposed Amendment" ([Exhibit I](#)).

Paraprofessionals are unsung heroes of our education workforce and are crucial element of the instructional workforce. There are high expectations in federal and State law. Through federal law, paraprofessionals are required to have a knowledge base in reading, math and writing instruction. Paraprofessionals have awareness of media and library abilities. In our State laws, there are provisions that deal with autism. Senator Kieckhefer has an initiative with S.B. 132 this Session regarding paraprofessional trainings for individualized education plans. Paraprofessionals are a critical component and should be included in the provisions of the bill. Unlicensed education personnel could also be included in the training eligibility elements of this bill.

SENATE BILL 132: Makes various changes relating to special education.
(BDR 34-217)

Chair Kieckhefer:

If we were to adopt your amendment, would your position shift from neutral to something else?

Mr. McLamore:

We are only here in the neutral position for procedural elements of presenting an amendment. We do support S.B. 474 and are requesting this addition. We had the chance to visit with Superintendent Erquiaga and he was supportive of our desire, but was cautionary on the fact that this is a targeted piece of legislation. Teachers will benefit from the initiatives in this bill and from other elements of PD outside of this bill.

Paraprofessionals are easy to come by. The efficiency and effectiveness of teachers will either be extenuated or impeded depending on the quality of the paraprofessional that is working alongside of them.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 474 and open the hearing on S.B. 491.

SENATE BILL 491: Makes an appropriation to provide a grant for the recruitment of persons to establish and operate high quality charter schools to serve families with the greatest needs. (BDR S-1189)

Mr. Erquiaga:

Senate Bill 491 provides for a harbormaster for the development of charter schools in our State. This bill is about catalyzing the development of the charter school industry. The Department of Administration has an RFP process that enables them to receive proposals from nonprofit organizations that perform the services identified in the bill.

The focus is to recruit charter management organizations (CMO)s that have a demonstrated success in operating high-quality charter schools and who also have recruiting, encouraging and developing staff committed to providing high quality charter schools. To grow the charter school sector we need to work on human capital and capital. Money could be used for operating costs and for the actual facilities.

The Department of Administration will issue an RFP and will receive grant applications from nonprofit entities classified as harbormasters. They would be required to match the State's contributions dollar-for-dollar and would then become the granting entity. The State is not the granting entity after that time. The nonprofit harbormaster would steer the development of quality and national best practice charter school organizations into our State.

This bill is important to growing our charter school industry. With the State providing the startup funds and requiring a match of those funds, we could inject millions of dollars into a sector where we still need thousands of seats to serve the most underprivileged and at-risk children in our State. The State has more students than buildings. Our numbers will continue to grow in this State and we will need more high quality buildings and seats. This bill does that and the charter option gives families the opportunity to have a choice. In certain

sections of our urban communities there are no charter schools and that is where our poorest children live. Our kids need choices and the opportunity to attend an organization that has a national reputation.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Is this a three-tiered structure where nonprofit entities would recruit CMOs?

Mr. Erquiaga:

Yes.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Describe the cash flow between the three-tiered structures.

Mr. Erquiaga:

The State would put its money into a nonprofit organization that has this purpose and then that organization would recruit the CMOs and provide the infrastructure and the operation of the human capital activities to make them successful.

Chair Kieckhefer:

There is a \$20 million appropriation, but is there a minimum \$40 million expenditure?

Mr. Erquiaga:

That is barely the tip of the iceberg. There is a large need for charter development funds in this State. We have a thriving charter school community in Nevada already, but could use many more. Nevada could put \$60 million to \$90 million in the charter school field and still be within the realm of needing additional money to support charter school growth.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Is it difficult to estimate the number of schools or chairs created with this fund?

Mr. Erquiaga:

Yes. That is the hardest thing for us to quantify. We know that the nonprofit organization, to which we would grant money, will then turn and grant funds to the charter organizations, but I do not know how many. I cannot quantify that and do not know the number of schools they will reach with this kind of an investment of matched State dollars. I will continue to try to get that

information. Organizations with harbor masters exist in other states. We have borrowed their models and will try to equate it to the number of seats.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will hear testimony in support of S.B. 491.

Mr. Gavin:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 491 on behalf of the SPCSA. The State's charter school sector is the third largest and fastest growing public school system in Nevada. Our portfolio has 20,000 students. There are roughly 34,000 students in charter schools statewide both in the district-sponsored sector and in the State-sponsored sector. Based on historical growth trends the charter school sector will eclipse WCSD as the State's second largest system by 2019. Our State has passed policies that have resulted in a portfolio, which is significantly more affluent and Caucasian than in other schools in this State. We have made progress in diversifying the populations that we have served. Our top performing schools are the ones that serve our suburban and upper-middle class students. Those schools have an easier time getting started and achieving exemplary outcomes than our schools that serve our most disadvantaged students.

Nevada's charter school sector has developed and imported a variety of models that work well for suburban students fleeing overcrowded schools. There is a very good reason why our suburban schools are growing as fast as they are. We have not been able to do the same for our most vulnerable students in our most challenged communities. The pipeline of local talent that can engage in developing and operating high quality schools that serve our students of color, bad backgrounds, disabilities and of low-income is far more limited than we would like.

The SPCSA only sponsors high quality schools that have a rigorous evaluation and vetting process. We take our responsibility to invest public dollars into individuals and teams of people very seriously and the results speak for themselves. Every seat we have added since 2011 has been at the four- or five-star level. We need to do more if we are to be in a position to ensure that we are sponsoring high quality schools that serve our most vulnerable kids. Senate Bill 491 has been built on best practices like the GTLF, Zoom schools, Victory schools and Read by Grade Three. I have worked closely with the

State's Superintendent and his team to examine the Nation's leading charter school portfolios.

In larger cities across the Nation, some charter schools' populations are significantly more disadvantaged than typical student populations. The children in those charter schools routinely outperform not only the students in their urban communities but also students in affluent suburban communities surrounding intercity areas. Charter schools in Boston outscore districts that spend three to four times the amount Boston spends on public education. Those charter schools serve many Latino students whose parents do not speak English.

This bill is a strategic investment that builds on experiences of intercity charter schools and on the unique needs and challenges of Nevada. The State's historic funding policies are described as the most regressive in the Country. It is not surprising that our public school choice market has gravitated towards communities where the level of funding is in alignment with the need of the students. The significant policy changes were made last Session that have helped with the diversification of our student body. The most notable policy change allows the SPCSA to access federal funds for the first time. We need to do more work to ensure the SPCSA's population reflects that of the State in terms of income, race and ethnicity while ensuring that our schools are performing at high levels. I am confident that the other investments you have considered tonight will continue to support that work. Funding changes will take time to implement and are only the first steps in a larger set of systemic changes.

It will take time to learn what works well from investments to determine the needs for change. This bill provides a great opportunity to expand the charter school sector with high quality schools in our most vulnerable communities across the State. There is a risk that the SPCSA would have one of the least diverse inequitable charter school sectors in the country with the expansion of students. In a rapidly growing minority state, having the least diverse student population is politically untenable and immoral.

We have looked carefully at other cities and states that lead the Nation in growth levels and those with the highest achieving high poverty schools in the Country. We have actively engaged with those states to learn what strategies they have used to develop and grow their schools so we can lean from their

work and replicate it here. This bill is essential to ensure that all of our schools across the State are performing at high levels.

Andrew Diss (StudentsFirst.org):

I am speaking in support of S.B. 491 on behalf of StudentsFirst. This bill will increase the quality of charter schools in the State. Over the last several years we have seen explosive growth in the charter school community. There are national charter schools all over the country that serve high poverty areas and have proven records of success with low-income students. This bill will make Nevada a more appealing place for high quality charter school operators to come to Nevada.

Mr. Greene:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 491 on behalf of Excellence in Education National, Inc. Several other states have implemented and setup harbormasters with the goal of attracting high quality charter schools. Stanford University conducted a study that looked at a similar setup and found that these schools produce significant student achievements and high performance for children in the most challenging neighborhoods.

Carrie A. Buck:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 491. I am an advocate for children in Nevada. Thousands of children in our State lack access to great schools simply because of their ZIP Code. A harbormaster can help solve this problem by recruiting charter schools that have evidence of success and sustainability. By recruiting high performing charter schools to focus on serving students in poverty, we can provide additional capacity to the CCSD, especially during their explosive growth, and create systemic change. This would help prove that all students can achieve on an absolute scale.

In an Education Cities' report entitled, "Building Education Cities" the authors profile several education harbormasters and local nonprofit organization leading efforts that have improved education and created the best conditions for more public schools to emerge in their communities. The report notes that successful education harbormasters invest in startup and growth of quality schools, build pipelines of effective educators and school leaders, support prochild and proteacher policies and engage parents in communities as leaders for change.

The expected outcomes for S.B. 491 includes recruiting and encouraging the development of leaders to create and operate charter schools serving our most at-risk kids living in poverty. This bill also recruits nonprofit CMOs that have demonstrated success across the Nation. Getting these people is highly competitive and this bill will help.

The applicant has to provide evidence for the ability of the nonprofit organization to accomplish these objectives. The applicant also has to provide evidence that the nonprofit organization can provide a sufficient amount of money for FY 2015 through FY 2016 and FY 2016 through 2017. This is a great example of how public/private partnerships help to resolve the significant problem of quality education for our poorest students in Nevada.

Mr. Vannozzi:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 491 on behalf of the LVGEA. We have about half the education workers needed for a city of Las Vegas' size. The LVGEA will work in cooperation with the harbormaster to try and recruit new charter schools to the region. With new CMOs, we can increase important education location quotients.

Joshua Ford:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 491. I am on the board of Equipo Academy, a new charter school, which will be serving children living in poverty in East Las Vegas. Equipo Academy began with an application process with the SPCSA. After approval, the processes hurdle significantly intensified. We had to create a holding company and raise \$6 million in private community funding to create our facility in East Las Vegas. Our vetting of vendors and contractors has taken extraordinary measures to reach a point for us to have the opportunity to continue five-star school ways. If a harbormaster was in existence, we could have centralized support for hiring talent, for creating systems, for vetting vendors and had support for our facility acquisition needs. That would have helped us offset our costs and would have given us the ability to focus on instruction and school management. The private dollars we raised should have gone to the harbormaster stated in S.B. 491.

Ms. Lazos:

Please refer to [Exhibit D](#).

I am speaking in support of S.B. 491 in my personal capacity and not representing the LLC. My ideological background prejudiced me against charter schools until I had the opportunity to be a part of the Public Education Foundation Leadership cohort this last year. In that class, I had the opportunity to come into contact with stellar charter school providers. There were leaders in that cohort who had turned around the opportunities for many children in urban areas and who had given them the chance to go to college. Charter schools have been more successful than public schools because they are free of bureaucracy, have stellar leaders, have high quality teachers and can give parents a vision of what the world would be like if their children go to college. Quality charter schools in Nevada can provide a best practice example to apply across the board and can help more children succeed in high urban district areas.

Mr. Wakefield:

I am speaking in support of S.B. 491 on my personal behalf. I want to applaud the Committee for having the conversation about good schools and not having the conversation of charter schools versus traditional public schools. One conversation is political and the other is about doing the right thing for our kids.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will hear neutral testimony on S.B. 491.

Ms. Bowen:

I am speaking as neutral on S.B. 491. When charter schools were introduced to Nevada, they were intended to create great schools within our districts that would offer many things to meet the needs of the children and not to compete with other noncharter schools. Nevada's children deserve the best education we can provide them and a consistent school system.

Chair Kieckhefer:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 491 and open public comment.

Senator Woodhouse:

I received a message from Susie Lee with testimony in support of S.B. 432 entitled, "Susie Lee Letter of Support S.B. 432" ([Exhibit J](#)).

Senate Committee on Finance
April 30, 2015
Page 60

Ms. Bowen:

One piece of the PD process left out of the discussion was the inclusion of substitute teachers.

Chair Kieckhefer:

Seeing no further business before this Committee, this meeting is adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Jason Gortari,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Ben Kieckhefer, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit / # of pages		Witness / Entity	Description
	A	2		Agenda
	B	8		Attendance Roster
S.B. 405	C	1	Marta Poling-Goldenne/ Nevadans for the Common Good	Testimony of the Rev. Dr. Marta Poling Goldenne
	D	1	Sylvia Lazos/Latino Leadership Council	Letter of Support Latino Leadership Council
S.B. 391 S.B. 405 S.B. 432	E	2	Victoria Carreón/Guinn Center for Policy Priorities	Guinn Center for Policy Priorities legislative testimony on Read by Grade 3, Zoom Schools and Victory Schools
S.B. 474	F	2	Victor Wakefield/Teach for America	The Nevada Consortium On The Teacher Pipeline Support Letter For SB474
S.B. 474	G	1	Patrick Beckwith/SCSD	Storey County School District Nevada Legislature 2015 Session Proposed Conceptual Amendment To SB 474
S.B. 474	H	2	Mike McLamore/ NSEA	NSEA Testimony Letter on SB 474
S.B. 474	I	2	Mike McLamore/NSEA	SB 474 NSEA Proposed Amendment
S.B. 432	J	3	Susie Lee/Communities in Schools of Nevada	Susie Lee Letter of Support SB 432